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SUBJECT: BALTIC SEA STATE COUNCIL: A KEY PLAYER DURING
SWEDEN'S EU PRESIDENCY

¶1. On October 20, Acting Economic Counselor attended the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) 10th anniversary of the establishment of its Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden. The CBSS was founded in 1992 to handle environmental, economic and labor issues in the Baltic Sea region. CBSS could assume a higher profile when Sweden rotates into the EU presidency in the summer of 2009. Sweden has stated that it will focus on climate, energy and the environment, as well as on the Baltic Sea region, and relations with neighboring countries during its six-month presidency.

¶2. CBSS has 12 members: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the EU. Seven countries have observer status: Ukraine, the U.S., the U.K., France, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovakia. The CBSS focuses on a number of fields:

- Removing regional economic barriers to trade.
- Improving nuclear and radiation safety.
- Promoting democracy and human rights.
- Combating human trafficking.
- Facilitating cross-border cooperation.
- Establishing the EuroFaculty program to transfer teaching methods and technology at three Baltic universities.
- Contributing input to the EU's policy framework for Northern Europe.
- Promoting sustainable development.

¶3. Another of the CBSS' is Baltic 21, which works to advance sustainable development in the Baltic Sea region by coordinating between the developed Nordic and the lesser developed Baltic countries. Baltic 21 addresses the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development. The Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC) supports the development of an environmentally sound energy market for the Baltic Sea region. BASREC views cooperation in the energy sector as a key factor in promoting political stability, economic growth and sustainable development in the region. The energy ministers of the Baltic Sea region countries and the EU have made the region a testing ground for joint implementation projects for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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